

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

FULL NAME: Ruth Bowles Bercaw

PRESENT POSITION Artist

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: November 23, 1932, at Lake Spring, Missouri

CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA: Painting - Oils

ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.):

1985 Kent State University, M.F.A.

1959 Washington University, B.F.A.

Eliza McMillan Award

Julia Mary and Charlotte Elizabeth Secor Award

Washington University Award, in recognition of outstanding merit

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):

Please see the attached sheet for a short, selected list of exhibitions.

COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

No named collections, as yet, but I keep hoping.

Local knowledgeable purchasers of my work include Jane Tesso, John P. Craig, Diane Disantis, Marilyn Farinacci, William Scheele, and Kathy Coakley (and probably a few others whose names I can't recall just now).

AWARDS:

1990 Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Grant - \$5000

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.

In 1988 I devised several prototype forms to serve as bases for a series of new works. Even though I am a painter I had been drawn to the effect of light on the forms of classical Greek sculpture, including some beautifully proportioned funeral stele. I conceived the notion of building crisp, modern, geometrically shaped constructions, covered with canvas, onto which I could paint a variety of imagery. At the time, I was dealing with social and environmental issues in my paintings, and used modern looking shield shapes as vehicles for semi-abstract paintings of rivers and

plains with encrusted layers of oil paint, over all of which an image of the disappearing condor brooded.

In that same year of 1988 I came across a book which contained a collection of photographs of large prehistoric ceremonial landscapes in Great Britain and Ireland. The images were very compelling to me in ways which I could not immediately identify, but I began incorporating aspects of them into my nature-oriented paintings. General fascination with prehistory, and recently prehistory of that particular area, has led me to see an almost magical aura surrounding those sites and objects found there, objects often carrying wonderful abstract designs. While it is not known what the designs and symbols meant, it is known that they served to enhance prestige and status. Some were symbols of power. - In any case, they speak to me as common denominators for other unknowns, universal societal qualities without boundaries of time or place.

My first prototype forms have evolved: some remain virtually the same, some have been reoriented, some abandoned. One entirely new prototype was devised last July/August and a group of small forms constructed for a multi-unit modular composition, and readied for painting. Before I had a chance to start the actual painting, in September my husband and I chanced to be invited to attend the Cleveland Air Show. There I was greatly struck by the clean form and astonishing beauty of one of the very modern planes as it made slow passes overhead. The plane gently rolled on its side once, flaunting its shape and exhibiting its prowess for the spectators, before veering out over the lake to turn and come round again. On the plane's second or third pass by us a great flush of recognition and excitement came over me as I realized that the plane's shape was very similar to my newest form, only, of course, huge in scale. In that instant I knew that I would be driven to dramatically increase the scale of some of my work.

The painting "New Outlook", accepted for the 1993 May Show, is one of two large paintings of this series. A sequence of somewhat prehistoric looking (?) symbols are arranged in framing fashion around the periphery of the form, and although the surface of the form is moving toward the viewer, one looks into a seeming deeper space completely at odds with the form. In several ways I have played opposites against each other, enjoying the unknowns, yet somewhat conscious of a bold newness of outlook.

Follows is a short list of exhibitions in which I have had works shown, and which have bearing on my current painting.

- 1993 "Women's Voices," Juried, Mather Gallery, CWRU, Cleveland
- 1992 "RUTH BERCAW and SHAWN GODWIN - EARTH IMAGES," Firelands Association for the Visual Arts, Oberlin, Ohio
"Mother Earth," four person exhibition, Ambrosia Gallery, Columbus, Ohio
- 1991 "Contemporary Art on Canvas," National Juried Competition, Maryland Federation of Art, Annapolis, Maryland
- 1990 "Ruth Bercaw Paintings," CAGE Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio
"The May Show," Juried Competition, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio
- 1989 "Paintings by Ruth Bercaw," Mather Gallery, CWRU, Cleveland, Ohio
"The May Show," Special Mention for Painting, Juried Competition, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio
- 1988 "Shape & Dimension, Works by Bercaw and Farinacci," National City Bank, Cleveland, Ohio
- 1987 "The May Show," Juried Competition, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio
- 1986 "Current Visions II," National Juried Competition, Germanow Art Gallery, Rochester, N.Y.
"Space: New Form, New Function," National Juried Competition, Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg, Tennessee
- 1985 "Other Dimensions: Works by Ruth Bercaw, Lawrence Krause, and Michael Loderstedt," B. K. Smith Gallery, Lake Erie College, Ohio
"The May Show," Juried Competition, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio
- 1977 "International Exhibition of Botanical Drawings," International Juried Competition, Clayton, N.J.
- 1968 "The May Show," Juried Competition, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio

Ruth B. Bercaw
2636 Lakeview Avenue
Rocky River, Ohio 44116

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

MAY 86

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on Cleveland Artists.

FULL NAME: Ruth Bowles Bercaw

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: November 23, 1932 at Lake Spring, Missouri

PRIMARY MEDIA oil painting

ART TRAINING - Schools, Scholarships, etc.: M.F.A., Kent State University, 1985
B.F.A., Washington University, 1959
University of Missouri - some design classes, 1950-52
Washington University award in recognition of outstanding merit (1957-58)
Julia Mary and Charlotte Elizabeth Secor Award (1957-58)
Eliza McMillan Award (1956-57)

essentially
honors
granted
as scholar-
ships

(1985) Cumulative grade point of 3.92, Kent State University; (1956) Alpha
Lambda Delta (a national scholastic honorary); (1951) Kappa Epsilon Alpha (nat'l
EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN: scholastic honorary) and Dean's List

"Current Visions II", National Competition, Germanow Art Gallery, Rochester, N.Y.
(Susan Crane, Curator of Contemporary Art, Albright-Knox, juror--Feb/Mar 1986)
"Three Painters: Bercaw, Brause, and Farinacci", SPACES, Clevel. Jan. 1986
"Bercaw and Gamundi", Contemporary Artists' Series, ARTREACH Gallery, Columbus, Feb
"Structural Energy; Bercaw Paintings and Fruce Sculpture", Gallery West, 1986
Cleveland, April 1986
"Other Dimensions: Works by Ruth Bercaw, Lawrence Krause and Michael Loderstedt",
B.K. Smith Gallery, Lake Erie College, Oct/Nov. 1985
"The May Show", The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1985

COLLECTIONS WHICH NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

Kay Tabor, Cleveland, Ohio
Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
Sohio, Cleveland, Ohio
The Huntington Bank Corporation, Columbus, O.
BankOne, Cleveland, Ohio
Richard C. Fanning, Cleveland, Ohio
Audrey and Burton Shatz, St. Louis, Mo.

AWARDS:

1984 First Place in Painting, Fine Arts Association, Willoughby, O.
1984 Jewish Community Center, Special Mention, Painting
1982 My Arts in Cleveland, Sohio award in painting
1978 Emerald Necklace Show, Special mention, painting
1975 Emerald Necklace Show, Special mention, oils
1962 First place in painting, "Second Annual Autumn Salon Art Exhibit, Ft. Sill, Ok.
1961 Citation Award in Painting, St. Louis Artists' Guild

PRESENT POSITION: 1958 First Place in Portrait, Washington University
1957 First Place in Portrait, Washington University
Present position: Self-employed artist, and part-time instructor at CCC.....

We would appreciate any information regarding subsequent awards, purchases, exhibitions and scholarships.
Thank you for your cooperation.

MAY 90

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

FULL NAME: Ruth Bowles Bercaw PRESENT POSITION Artist
DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: Nov. 23, 1932 at Lake Spring, Missouri.
CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA: Painting - Oil
ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.): M.F.A., Kent State University (1985)
B.F.A., Washington University (1959)
University of Missouri (1950-52)

Eliza McMillan Scholarship (Faculty awarded)
Julia Mary and Charlotte Elizabeth Secor Scholarship (Faculty awarded)
Washington University Scholarship in Recognition of Outstanding Merit

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):

Please see attached resumé of selected exhibitions.

In addition:

Solo exhibitions of my work are scheduled for May at the Women's City Club of Cleveland, and for later in the year at C.A.G.E. in Cincinnati.

COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

Audry and Burton Shatz, St. Louis
Washington University, St. Louis
William Scheele, Cleveland
Kay Tabor, Cleveland

And a variety of corporate collections including Sohio, Huntington Bank, BancOne and McDonald's Corporation.

AWARDS:

Unhappily, to date I have no major awards to report.

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.

A recent generalized statement of my philosophy in art is attached; it is probably the more important source for information about my current work, though an explanation of some specific thinking involved in the Ribbon River series in this year's May Show may be of interest, and follows below.

"Order of Ribbon River Shields," itself, represents a mix of meanings and images to me. - In regards to the use of multiple forms in

(over)

association as a vehicle for a larger artistic statement, I have reflected on displays of shields in the Tower of London, and at the Art Institute of Chicago -- long glass cases containing encrusted and decorated shields, some clearly for pageantry more than for function, all gleaming under lights which reveal shapes and designs, visual references to stories of individuals, alliances, and causes long past. Decoding the meanings of everything would require experts, but anyone with a feel for history can relate to the array, the sometimes marshalling and ordering of like or similar interests (I think I can recall, as a child, hearing of societies with names using 'Order' with, I believe, no military interests -- organizations such as the Order of the Knights of Columbus, or The Order of the Eastern Star.). - Anyway, I used this notion of a society in the context of my composition: the increasing awareness in our present day of dangers to our earth's environment has brought together formerly disparate peoples and interests. No attempt was made in my work to illustrate specific types of interests; that was not my goal. The distinction between the four units in my piece came about through formal artistic considerations only.

Certainly, the visual massing of the four elements brings a sense of strength and some surprise to the piece, I think. An underlying first lay-in of a landscape stretching across the whole work (though completely painted over by the end) provided me with some rhythms and movements which still unite the piece. Each unit was taken aside and painted separately from time to time, then re-united into the whole and repainted on repeated occasions. In the end, though the whole work is more exciting to me than single pieces, each piece can, nonetheless, definitely stand alone, as a solo work, and is so labelled on the back where each work is signed. To me, each piece is satisfying by itself.

The work is also tied to music. I think of the four related, but different, pieces as movements in a piece of chamber music. I read the work from left to right. For this reason I probably prefer the lighting to bathe the left sides of the units more strongly than the right--it seemingly facilitates the sense of the music, the flow, the building, and the resolution.

(The direction of lighting which I just described may not be important to the work--it is simply the way in which I painted it, and I tend to think of it in that way.)

Ruth B. Bercaw

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My recent works are mostly oil paintings, though sometimes acrylic/latex/charcoal, on structured canvas.

In the making, I have thought of the work as representing pieces or chunks of time and matter in a space warp, bearing marks and tales of things both past and future, with encryptions of various kinds. - The images, which are partially recognizable, are tied to our earth and to us as its occupants; they are general and universal in character, and are employed in metaphorical ways. The forms, themselves, are viewed as either cleaved from time and matter, struck from the whole by physical force, or, alternatively, as manifestations of abstract entities, conceived, and then shaped through great effort.

For the most part, my works end up being fairly thickly painted. I have viewed the materials as being built up layer by layer with silt and paint settling over creatures and dreams, and have fancied that one could shear away planes and reveal metamorphosed things beneath the surfaces. I have envisioned that one could scratch or carve into the forms and glimpse snatches of fugitive ideas, and hues haloing unknowns, haunting bits of things wild and human, times in which ancients existed, and yet we are present.

I have seen some of these forms as being old and used, yet naive as a freshly chipped piece of flint or sandstone. And, I have viewed other forms as intensely purposeful shapes, conscious, constructed, embellished--like shields for ritual show, to impress, with images to placate one's gods, whether old or new, and to confound one's foes.

Ruth B. Bercaw
January, 1990

RUTH B. BERCAW

2636 Lakeview Avenue
Rocky River, Ohio 44116
(216) 331-8743

EDUCATION

- 1985 Kent State University, M.F.A.
1959 Washington University, B.F.A.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 1989 "The May Show," Special Mention for Painting, Juried Competition, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland
"Paintings by Ruth Bercaw," Mather Gallery, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland
"Women Artists: A Celebration," First Place in Painting, Regional Juried Competition, Youngstown, Ohio
"United Nations World Environment Day Exhibition," Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland
"Governor's Residence Art Collection (1989/90)," Columbus, Ohio
- 1988 "Painted Wall Sculpture/Paintings," by Ruth B. Bercaw, Tenth Street Market, Cleveland
"Shape & Dimension, Works by Bercaw and Farinacci," National City Bank, Cleveland
- 1987 "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (Juried Competition)
"Fantastic Art - Imagery from Fantasy and Mythology," Northeast Ohio Art Museum, Cleveland
- 1986 "32nd Annual Exhibition," JCC, Cleveland. First Place Award in Painting (Juror, I. Michael Danoff)
"Current Visions II," National Juried Competition, Germanow Art Gallery, Rochester, N.Y. (Susan Crane, Juror)
"Space: New Form, New Function," National Juried Competition, Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg
"The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (Juried Competition)
"Three Painters: Bercaw, Brause, and Farinacci," SPACES, Cleveland, Ohio
"Structural Energy: Bercaw and Fruce," Gallery West, Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland
"Bercaw and Gamundi," Contemporary Artists' Series, ARTREACH Gallery, Columbus, Ohio

(Abbreviated Bercaw Resumé, Selected Exhibitions, continued)

- "Three Rivers Art Festival," Regional Juried Competition, Pittsburgh (Lynn Gumpert, Juror)
- 1985 "Other Dimensions: Works by Ruth Bercaw, Lawrence Krause and Michael Loderstedt," B. K. Smith Gallery, Lake Erie College, Ohio
- "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried Competition)
- 1984 "Ten Paintings - Ten Painters," Kent State University, Kent, Ohio (Curator, Joan Gardner)
- "Ohio Art in the New Depression," Kent State University, Kent, Ohio (Regional Juried)
- 1983 "Portfolio '83," NOVA, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried)
- 1981 "DRAWING," NOVA, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried)
- "Drawing Invitational," Baldwin Wallace College, Berea, Ohio
- 1980 "Bonfoey on the Square Painters," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1979 "Whiskey Island Painters," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1977 "International Exhibition of Botanical Drawings," Clayton, N.J. (International Juried Competition)
- 1968 "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried Competition)
- 1967 "Painters of the Circle Gallery," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1962 "Second Annual Autumn Salon Art Exhibit," First Place Award in Painting, Ft. Sill, Oklahoma (Juried)
- 1961 "The Missouri Show," St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri (Juried Competition)
- "Painting Exhibition," St. Louis Artists' Guild, St. Louis, Missouri (Juried)

CURRENT GALLERY AFFILIATIONS

Bonfoey's, Cleveland, Ohio
Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, Cleveland
Scheele Galleries, Cleveland
AES, Chicago

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

1989

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

FULL NAME: Ruth Bowles Bercaw **PRESENT POSITION** Artist/Teacher
DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: Nov. 23, 1932 at Lake Spring, Mo. Painting at the
 Cleveland Institute of Art
CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA: Painting - Oil

ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.): M.F.A., Kent State University (1985)
 B.F.A., Washington University (1959)
 University of Missouri (1950-52)
 Eliza McMillan Scholarship (Faculty awarded)
 Julia Mary and Charlotte Elizabeth Secor Scholarship (Faculty awarded)
 Washington University Scholarship in Recognition of Outstanding Merit

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):

Please see attached resumé of selected exhibition record.

COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

Audry and Burton Shatz, St. Louis
 Washington University, St. Louis
 William Scheele, Cleveland
 Kay Tabor, Cleveland

A variety of corporate collections including Sohio, Huntington Bank, and BankOne.

AWARDS: Of really prestigious awards, I am sorry to say that I have none to list. I very narrowly missed receiving an Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist grant this year; my new earth shield pieces were not all complete in time to be photographed. Still, the OAC has asked for one of my Earth Shield works (similar in scale and content to one in the May Show) to be shown in the "Governor's Residence Art Collection (1989/90" along with the other designated fellowship recipients.

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.

My current work has evolved out of formal artistic considerations--extending my former painted illusions of form onto real, 3-dimensional forms--and reflections on nature, the environment, and man's relation to it all. Recent wedge formed pieces are conceived as being chunks of time, quarried and shaped, their flat, sheared surfaces revealing bits of ancient life forms, often evidence of man, along with marks of the elements and forces instrumental in their formations. The earth shield works (such as "Earth Shield (for Past, Present, Future" in this year's May Show) present scarred surfaces on which interaction of nature and man are noted, with prehistoric plants and animals appearing strangely human, all mixed with traces of civilizations, and placed in a time/space warp which is, at once, very old and very new.

(opening remarks prepared for Mather Gallery talk, April 11, 1989.)

Introduction--my degrees, very early childhood with Daddy and Mother. Professional art career, teaching. Realism to abstract considerations. The world of ideas. Partial return to recognizable imagery on three-dimensional forms.

"These works reflect my belief that I, we, all of us, are on a time line which is virtually endless into the past, and which may be endless into the future. I believe that eras and epochs have come and gone, that species of animals, plants, all manner of creatures and things have come (and most are gone), and in their passage leave their marks or essence through space and time.

I am part of it all, an element, a piece of thinking, feeling humanity, existing in this tiny piece of time, this environment. I am a part of nature, breathing as the whole breathes, as the earth moves, as the winds blow, as the seas wash and batter the shores, as plates and continents shift and grind into new adjustments.

As geologic time goes, I am close to the time of the people of the dolmen and menhirs of Great Britain; I am close to the people who painted in the caves of Lascaux, close to the people of the pyramids of Egypt, the people of the Greek Parthenon, to the people of Borobudur, to those of ancient China. I am close, in time, to all these people, all civilizations wherever or whenever they existed.

In these paintings I have taken myself to a vantage point far into the future, and look backwards into wedges of time, or space, or earth. I am reading, and ask the viewer to read, part of the record which may be there. I reflect on the relationship of man to man, to Nature, to our God (or Gods)."

Describe how the pieces are made, the imagery, inside to outside. Use of certain images which seem to have universal implications and can be read/interpreted in many ways. Invite the viewer to read his/her experiences into the works, to be challenged. Questions.

Ruth Bowles Bercaw

RUTH B. BERCAW

2636 Lakeview Avenue
Rocky River, Ohio 44116
(216) 331-8743

EDUCATION

- 1985 Kent State University, M.F.A.
1959 Washington University, B.F.A.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 1989 "Paintings by Ruth Bercaw," Mather Gallery, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland
"Women Artists: A Celebration" Youngstown, Ohio (Regional Juried Competition, First Place Award)
"United Nations World Environment Day Exhibition," Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland
"Governor's Residence Art Collection (1989/90)," Columbus, Ohio
- 1988 "Painted Wall Sculpture/Paintings, by Ruth B. Bercaw," Tenth Street Market, Cleveland
"Shape & Dimension, Works by Bercaw and Farinacci," National City Bank, Cleveland
- 1987 "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (Juried Competition)
"Fantastic Art - Imagery from Fantasy and Mythology," Northeast Ohio Art Museum, Cleveland
- 1986 "32nd Annual Exhibition," JCC, Cleveland. First Place Award in Painting (Juror, I. Michael Danoff)
"Current Visions II," National Juried Competition, Germanow Art Gallery, Rochester, N.Y. (Susan Crane, Juror)
"Space: New Form, New Function," National Juried Competition, Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg
"The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (Juried Competition)
"Three Painters: Bercaw, Brause, and Farinacci," SPACES, Cleveland, Ohio
"Structural Energy: Bercaw and Fauce," Gallery West, Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland
"Bercaw and Gamundi," Contemporary Artists' Series, ARTREACH Gallery, Columbus, Ohio
"Three Rivers Art Festival," Regional Juried Competition, Pittsburgh (Lynn Gumpert, Juror)
- 1985 "Other Dimensions: Works by Ruth Bercaw, Lawrence Krause and Michael Loderstedt," B. K. Smith Gallery, Lake Erie College, Ohio

(Abbreviated Bercaw resumé, Selected Exhibitions, continued)

- "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried Competition)
- 1984 "Ten Paintings - Ten Painters," Kent State University, Kent, Ohio (Curator, Joan Gardner)
- "Ohio Art in the New Depression," Kent State University, Kent, Ohio (Regional Juried)
- 1983 "Portfolio '83" NOVA, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried)
- 1981 "DRAWING," NOVA, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried)
- "Drawing Invitational," Baldwin Wallace College, Berea, Ohio
- 1980 "Bonfoey on the Square Painters," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1979 "Whiskey Island Painters," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1977 "International Exhibition of Botanical Drawings," Clayton, N.J. (International Juried Competition)
- 1968 "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried Competition)
- 1967 "Painters of the Circle Gallery," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1962 "Second Annual Autumn Salon Art Exhibit," Fort Sill, Oklahoma (First Place Award in Painting, Juried)
- 1961 "The Missouri Show," St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri (Juried)
- "Painting Exhibition," St. Louis Artists' Guild, St. Louis, Missouri (Juried)

CURRENT GALLERY AFFILIATIONS

Bonfoey's, Cleveland, Ohio
Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, Cleveland
Scheele Galleries, Cleveland, Ohio

CURRENT Teaching Status

Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland (Painting)

ENTERTAINMENT

A lifelong study: Back to the earth

By HELEN CULLINAN
ART CRITIC

As a child growing up in Missouri, Ruth Bowles Bercaw often accompanied her parents on travels to the West. Her father, a geologist and mining engineer, was set on having his children know all about minerals, rocks, earth forms and fossils. Her mother, a schoolteacher, pointed out beautiful scenes.

Those experiences help explain Bercaw's visually ravishing and complicated "Earth Shields" and other paintings in her Mather Gallery exhibition. It's a direction that Bercaw feels she's been preparing for all her life, working through various forms of portraiture, landscape and abstraction until the large, shaped environmental canvases came to the surface.

Immediately before the new series began to dictate itself, "I was painting the illusion of three-dimensional form on two-dimensional surfaces," Bercaw said. "It seemed only natural to move to the actual third dimensional."

The new work involves extensive preparation of the structured canvas shapes on an armature before painting begins.

Underlying the seemingly abstract surface designs are metaphors and symbols based on geological concepts and terms. Bercaw paints in a language of riverbeds, earth planes, trilobites, ancient dolmen. The bird that sometimes appears in the more recognizable designs is the condor.

In a gesture reminiscent of the butterfly signature used by Whistler and Burchfield, Bercaw uses the recurrent trilobite (an extinct marine arthropod with a three-part body) as her signature for the Earth Shield series.

In a recent gallery talk, Bercaw explained the deeply felt world view ingrained in her work: "These paintings reflect my belief that (we) are on a time line that is virtually endless into the past and future. I believe that eras and epochs have come and gone, that species of animals, plants, all manner of creatures and things have ... left their mark or essence.

"I am part of it all, an element, a piece of thinking, feeling humanity, existing in this tiny piece of time, this environment. ... As geologic time goes, I am close to the dolmen

■ "Earth Shields and Other Paintings by Ruth Bercaw" can be seen at Case Western Reserve University's Mather Gallery, 11111 Euclid Ave., from noon to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and until 8 p.m. Wednesdays, through April 28.

and menhirs of Great Britain. I am close to the people who painted the caves of Lascaux; close to the pyramids of Egypt, the people of the Greek Parthenon. ... In these paintings I have taken myself to a vantage point far into the future and look backward into wedges of time or space or earth."

Many of the 15 works are in multiple formats of related parts, in contrast to those acting as monolithic objects. Each is an immaculately crafted object from every angle, including the back.

Many of the titles that Bercaw gives these intriguing painting-reliefs indicate personal reminiscences of family travels. One giant wedge-shaped painting is called "Daddy Explained the Earth to Me — Revelations"; a triptych is called "Daddy Explained Buried Treasure."

The subliminal message in Bercaw's work is about "man torching his beliefs" along with his earth. "I want these to be strong paintings, but I don't entertain any aggression," she said. "The story is there, but I am dealing with the formal aspects of art. The forms should speak for themselves."

Bercaw received her BFA degree from Washington University in St. Louis and her MFA from Kent State University. She is a part-time painting instructor at the Cleveland Institute of Art.



PD/ANDREW CIFRANIC

Ruth Bercaw, with "Earth Shield" painting at the Mather Gallery.

May Show Office
Cleveland Museum of Art

2636 Lakeview Avenue
Rocky River, Ohio 44116
April 25, 1989

I fear that, again, I have forgotten to relay to you my activities of this past year. I may have written you of my show (with M. Farinacci) in March/April of 1988 at the National City Bank Atrium Gallery--the show was entitled "Shape and Dimension". In addition to a small solo show of my paintings at the Tenth Street in December (1988)/January (1989), I exhibited in the Cleveland Institute of Art Faculty Show in December of 1988. My main focus during this past year, however has been the solo show which is currently at CWRU's Mather Gallery--all the works being dimensional paintings. - I was very happy that my Mather show was reviewed and some qualities of the works recognized.

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Bercaw

331-8743

MAY 87

RUTH B. BERCAW
2636 Lakeview Avenue
Rocky River, Ohio, 44116
(216) 331-8743

EDUCATION

1985 Kent State University, M.F.A.
1959 Washington University, B.F.A.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

1986 "32nd Annual Exhibition", JCC, Cleveland, Ohio.
First Place Award in Painting (Juror,
I. Michael Danoff)
"Current Visions II," National Juried Competition,
Germanow Art Gallery, Rochester, N.Y. (Susan
Crane, Juror)
"Space: New Form, New Function," National Juried
Competition, Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg,
Tennessee
"The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland,
Ohio
"Three Painters: Bercaw, Brause, and Farinacci,"
SPACES, Cleveland, Ohio
"Structural Energy: Bercaw and Fruce," Gallery
West, Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland,
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"Bercaw and Gamundi," Contemporary Artists' Series,
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"Three Rivers Art Festival", Regional Juried Com-
petition, Pittsburgh, Pa. (Lynn Gumpert, Juror)
"Cleveland Institute of Art Faculty Show", Cleve-
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1985 "Other Dimensions: Works by Ruth Bercaw, Lawrence
Krause and Michael Loderstedt," B. K. Smith
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Ohio (Juried)
1984 "Ten Paintings - Ten Painters," Kent State Univer-
sity, Kent, Ohio (Curator, Joan Gardner)
"Ohio Art in the New Depression," Kent State Uni-
versity, Kent, Ohio (Regional Juried)
1983 "Portfolio '83," NOVA, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried)
1981 "Drawings," NOVA, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried)
"Drawing Invitational," Baldwin Wallace College,
Berea, Ohio (Curated)

(Abbreviated Bercaw resume, continued)

- 1980 "Bonfoey on the Square Painters," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1979 "Whiskey Island Painters," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1977 "International Exhibition of Botanical Drawings,"
Clayton, N.J. (International Juried Competition)
- 1968 "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland,
Ohio (Juried)
- 1967 "Painters of the Circle Gallery," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1962 "Second Annual Autumn Salon Art Exhibit," Fort
Sill, Oklahoma (Juried)
- 1961 "The Missouri Show," St. Louis City Art Museum,
St. Louis, Missouri (Juried)
- "Painting Exhibition," St. Louis Artists' Guild,
St. Louis, Missouri (Juried)

CURRENT GALLERY AFFILIATIONS

Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, Cleveland, Ohio
The Bonfoey Company, Cleveland, Ohio

CURRENT TEACHING STATUS

Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, Ohio (Painting)
Cuyahoga Community College, Parma, Ohio (Design and Drawing)

Realistic imagery, once a constant in my work, has been overtaken by abstraction. During and after my undergraduate studies I garnered many honors via fairly conventional artistic statements: portrait, landscape, cityscape. In this vein I had work accepted into an international botanical drawing exhibition. Still, I was not really happy with a great deal of my work, for no matter how I manipulated the imagery, it seemed to me that I was unable to bend realism into any sort of compelling statement.

In 1972, while still executing realistic works as described above, I began some more expressive pieces as part of my artistic output. For this the subject vehicle which I chose was landscape; I used watercolor as my medium, and I worked quite small. Within a few years these experimental works had moved close to total abstractions.

By 1982, when I commenced graduate studies, the bulk of my work was comprised of only partially recognizable imagery. In 1983 I completely dropped even those references and devised my own image. Initially my image was partly organic, partly geometric in character; it exhibited sharply delineated planes and was solid and weighty in structure. This form, modified and added to, has remained as the core element in the vocabulary of images which I have used. The content and meaning of any one painting has been conveyed by the configurations given to the various images and their relationship and deployment vis-a-vis each other.

My interests in the environment, human and societal values, and general current events have all found direct or oblique expression in my work since 1983. In addition, I have recently introduced content into paintings which is purposefully in stark contrast to those subjects just stated above: that is, the subjects of some works are of un-historical ancient events, off-the-wall mythology, or irrelevancies of one kind or another.

Ruth B. Bercaw

2636 Lakeview Avenue
Rocky River, Ohio 44116
February 19, 1986

The May Show Office
The Cleveland Museum of Art

Gentlemen:

Please add the following information to the biographical data on me which is on file in your office.

1986 Exhibitions:

"Current Visions II", Germanow Art Gallery, Rochester, N.Y. (Feb/March), National Juried Show (juror: Susan Krane, curator of contemporary art, Albright Knox Gallery)

"Three Painters: Bercaw, Brause, and Farinacci", SPACES, Cleveland, Ohio (January)

ARTREACH: "Bercaw and Gamundi", Columbus, Ohio (Feb.)

"Structure and Energy, Bercaw and Fruce", Gallery West of Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, Ohio (April)

1985 Exhibitions:

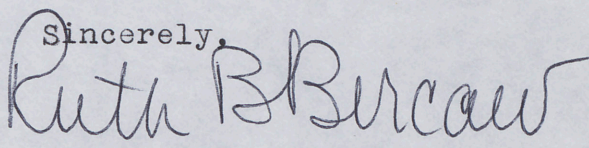
"Other Dimensions: Works by Ruth Bercaw, Lawrence Krause and Michael Loderstedt," B. K. Smith Gallery, Lake Erie College, Ohio

Ohio State Fair Fine Arts Exhibition, Columbus, Ohio (juried by Richard Estes of N.Y.)

The May Show, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio

"28th TAG Annual", Warren, Ohio

Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Ruth B. Bercaw

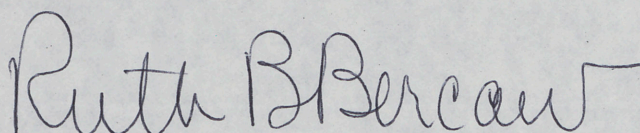
ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Since 1959 the greater part of my artistic output has employed very realistic imagery along with standard usage of painting and drawing media. My ideas concerning what to do with the images were somewhat indecisive, the net result being that I felt compelled to explain my work to everybody in order to justify its very existence.

Eventually I became quite dissatisfied. The ideas with which I'd been dealing were not really gut, and besides they were so laden with finished surfaces that absolutely nothing could be made to soar in spirited fashion. It took me years of effort to work through variations on this and that before I finally came to the realization that I was bored with it all, certainly bored with tradition as I had been using it. The only way for me to break out was to finally cut the last ties with realism, and float free. In the summer of 1983 I did just that.

During those months I devised the core image which is employed throughout the current works. Basically, the original image was triangular in shape, becoming a wedge-like chunk of earth and roots, carved fairly geometrically with slab sides, and having an organic top (rather like tree trunks) which later became more columnar in structure. Transformed, added to, and still evolving with each new painting, these basic units now constitute my visual vocabulary. It is the final form given to the various images, and their relationship to each other within the canvas space, which constitutes the content of each of the individual works.

I am very excited about the possibilities in my work now. I am full of ideas.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ruth B. Bercaw". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ruth B. Bercaw
Jan. 27, 1980

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

MAY 85

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on Cleveland Artists.

FULL NAME: Ruth Bowles Bercaw

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: November 23, 1932 Lake Spring, Missouri

PRIMARY MEDIA Oil

ART TRAINING - Schools, Scholarships, etc.: M.F.A. Kent State University 1985 (cumulative grade point average 3.91)

B.F.A. Washington University 1959

Washington University Merit Scholarship

Julia Mary and Charlotte Elizabeth Secor Scholarship } at Washington University
Eliza McMillan Scholarship }

University of Missouri -(Some design classes only)

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN:

Fine Arts Association Annual Painting Exhibition (Award, see below), 1984

Jewish Community Center Exhibition (Mention, see below), 1984

"Ohio Art in the New Depression", 1984

"Ten Paintings - Ten Painters", 1984

"International Exhibition of Botanical Drawings"., 1977

"My Art's in Cleveland", 1984 and 1982

Emerald Necklace Exhibitions, 1978, 1976, 1975 (Awards, see below)

The May Show (1968, I believe) (see attached resume)

COLLECTIONS WHICH NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

Audry and Burton Shatz

Washington University

Sohio

The Huntington Bank Corporation

SCM

AWARDS: 1984, First Place in Painting, Fine Arts Association Annual

1984, Special Mention, Painting, Jewish Community Center

1982, Purchase Award, "My Art's in Cleveland"

1978, Juror's Award, Emerald Necklace Show, (Drawing)

1976, Special Mention, Emerald Necklace Show, (Painting)

1975, Special Mention in Oils, Emerald Necklace Show

1976, First Place in Painting, Ft. Sill Second Annual Autumn Salon Art Exhibit

1961, Citation Award, St. Louis Artists' Guild (Painting)

PRESENT POSITION: 1958, First Place in Portrait, Washington University

Adjunct Faculty 1957, First Place in Portrait, Washington University

(Art) Cuyahoga Community College

We would appreciate any information regarding subsequent awards, purchases, exhibitions and scholarships.
Thank you for your cooperation.

RUTH B. BERCAW, 2636 Lakeview Avenue, Rocky River,
Ohio, 44116 (216) 331-8743

EDUCATION

1985 Kent State University, M.F.A.
1959 Washington University, B.F.A.
1950-52 University of Missouri

GRANTS AND AWARDS

1984 Fine Arts Association, First Place in Painting
1984 Jewish Community Center, Special Mention, Painting
1982 "My Arts in Cleveland", Sonio purchase award in
painting
1978 Emerald Necklace Show, Juror's Award, Drawing
1976 "Emerald Necklace Show", Special Mention, Painting
1975 "Emerald Necklace Show", Special Mention, Oils
1962 "Second Annual Autumn Salon Art Exhibit", Ft. Sill,
First Place in Painting
1961 St. Louis Artists' Guild, Citation Award, Painting
1958 Washington University, First Place in Portrait
1957-58 Washington University, Award in recognition of
outstanding merit
1957-58 Julia Mary and Charlotte Elizabeth Secor Award
1957 Washington University, First Place in Portrait
1956-57 Eliza McMillan Award

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1985 Kent State University, Kent, Ohio
1984 Kent State University, Kent, Ohio
1976 St. Peter's, Lakewood, Ohio
1975 Cain Park, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
1968 PAFAC, Parma, Ohio
1959 University of Missouri, Rolla, Missouri

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1985 "April Arts", Cleveland, Ohio
Gallery West, CCC Faculty, Parma, Ohio
1984 Fine Arts Association Annual, Willoughby, Ohio
Jewish Community Center Painting, Cleveland
Heights
"My Art's in Cleveland", Cleveland, Ohio
Metro CCC Faculty, Cleveland, Ohio
"Ten Paintings - Ten Painters", curated by Joan
Gardner, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio
Gallery West, CCC West Faculty Exhibition, Parma,
Ohio
"Ohio Art in the New Depression", Kent State Uni-
versity, Kent, Ohio

- 1983 "Portfolio '83". NOVA
Gallery West, CCC West Faculty Exhibition, Parma,
Ohio
- 1982 "My Art's in Cleveland", Cleveland, Ohio
CCC West, Faculty Exhibition
- 1981 "Drawings", NOVA, Cleveland, Ohio
"My Art's in Cleveland", Cleveland, Ohio
"Drawing Invitational", Baldwin-Wallace College,
Berea, Ohio
CCC West, Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
- 1980 "Religious Art", Neuman Society, Cleveland, Ohio
CCC West, Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
"Bonfoey On The Square Painters", Cleveland, Ohio
- 1979 Cooper School Exhibition, Cleveland, Ohio
CCC West, Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
"Whiskey Island Painters", Cleveland, Ohio
"Statehouse Exhibition", Columbus, Ohio
- 1978 Cooper School Exhibition, Cleveland, Ohio
CCC West, Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
"Statehouse Exhibition", Columbus, Ohio
"The Emerald Necklace Show", Bay Village, Ohio
"The Art Show", Rocky River, Ohio
- 1977 "International Exhibition of Botanical Drawings",
Clayton, N.J.
"Proscenium '77", Cleveland, Ohio
CCC West, Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
"Arts Showcase", Rocky River, Ohio
"Paintings and Drawings", Lakewood, Ohio
- 1976 "The Emerald Necklace Show", Bay Village, Ohio
CCC West, Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
"Bercaw at St. Peter's", Lakewood, Ohio
"April Arts", Rocky River, Ohio
- 1975 PAFAC Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
"The Emerald Necklace Show", Bay Village, Ohio
"Ruth Bercaw and Steve Cagan", Cleveland Heights,
Ohio
St. Peter's Invitational, Lakewood, Ohio
Baycrafter's Juried, Bay Village, Ohio

RUTH B. Bercaw

Page 3

- 1974 Artists and Craftsmen Annual, Cleveland, Ohio
PAFAC Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
Women's Art Club of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio
- 1973 PAFAC Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
Artists and Craftsmen Annual, Cleveland, Ohio
Women's Art Club of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio
"The Art Show", Rocky River, Ohio
- 1969 PAFAC Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
- 1968 "The May Show", Cleveland Museum of Art
"Bercaw and Backston", Parma, Ohio
PAFAC Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
Women's Art Club of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio
Artists and Craftsmen Annual, Cleveland, Ohio
- 1967 PAFAC Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
"Painters of the Circle Gallery", Cleveland, Ohio
- 1964 Cooper School Faculty Exhibition, Cleveland, Ohio
PAFAC Faculty Exhibition, Parma, Ohio
Artists and Craftsmen Annual, Cleveland, Ohio
- 1962 "Second Annual Autumn Salon Art Exhibit", Ft.
Sill, Oklahoma
- 1961 "Painting Exhibition", St. Louis Artists' Guild
"The Missouri Show", St. Louis City Art Museum
- 1954 "Women Painters", Kuala Lumpur, Malaya
"Singapore Art Society Painter's Annual",
Singapore
- 1953 "Singapore Art Society Painter's Annual",
Singapore

CURRENT GALLERY AFFILIATIONS

The Bonfoey Company, Cleveland
FineArt Co, Cleveland

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Audrey and Burton Shatz, St. Louis
Washington University, St. Louis
Sonio
The Huntington Bank Corporation, Columbus, Ohio

RUTH B. BERCAW

Page 4

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1975 to present, Cuyahoga Community College. Drawing, design, painting, life drawing, art appreciation, art history.

1982, Cleveland Institute of Art. Fall semester, painting.

1978 to 1980, and 1962 to 1965, Cooper School of Art.

1963 to 1969, Parma Area Fine Arts Council. painting and portrait.

1959 to 1962, People's Art Center, St. Louis. Figure structure, outdoor painting and drawing, composition.

1959 to 1962, WYCA/WYCA, St. Louis. Portrait painting and drawing.

ACADEMIC HONORS

1985 Cumulative grade point of 3.95, Kent State University

1956 Alpha Lambda Delta (National Scholastic Honorary)

1951 Kappa Epsilon Alpha (National Scholastic Honorary Society)
Dean's Honor Roll

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear *Ruth Bercaw*,

We are trying to build a biographical record of Cleveland Artists for reference. May we enlist your assistance with the following data?

FULL NAME: **Ruth Bowles Bercaw** MEDIA: **Painting and graphics**

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: **November 23, 1932 at Lake Spring, Missouri**

ART TRAINING - Schools, Scholarships, etc: **A few design courses at University of Missouri during 1950-52 period (was a scholarship and honor student there). Serious art training was all at Washington University in St. Louis, 1955 to 1959. Received a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree. Was an honor student and received several**

~~XXXXX~~ **scholarships (see reverse of page for listings.)**

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN:
Overseas exhibits in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur (didn't write down names of the exhibits, but they were during the 1952 to 55 period). Several small group exhibits in St. Louis, none important. Showed at the People's Art Center, The St. Louis Artists Guild (award below), the Missouri Show, then a fort-wide local show at Ft Sill (Okla) when my husband was there for ROTC training (award below). Cleveland in 1963 and since. Nothing important. Circle Gallery, Vixebroxi (sp), Cooper School of Art shows (taught painting and drawing there for a while), and in small art club shows. Parma gallery show in 1966(?), 1968 May Show.

COLLECTIONS WHICH NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK: No big collections. Washington University owns a large painting of mine, but ~~doubt~~ it is listed in their "collection". It is a large portrait of a professor emeritus, Dr. Arthur Llewellyn Hughes. Painting was accepted in a ceremony by Chancellor Elliot, and it now hangs in the Arthur Holly Compton physics library. Until recently have mostly concentrated on portraits. Locally, best ones are owned by Dr. and Mrs. David C. Liu, Dr. and Mrs. Edmund T. Boschitz, Mr. and Mrs. Guy S. Kidwell II, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Goldstein.

AWARDS: 1957 - Washington University Prize in Portraiture (1st and 2nd place tie)
1958 - Washington University First Prize in Portraiture
1961 - Citation Award - St. Louis Artists Guild (Missouri)
1962 - 1st place in oils, Second Annual Autumn Salon Art Exhibit (Okla)

PRESENT POSITION: wife, mother, scrub woman, laundress, gardner.....etc. artist.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would inform us of subsequent awards, purchases, exhibitions and scholarships. Thankyou for your cooperation.

Ally Barnes
Assistant Curator of Paintings

University of Missouri. Sept., 1950 to Feb. 1952.

Sears Roebuck Scholarship (in home economics!)

Dean's Honor Roll Student

Kappa Epsilon Alpha (1951)- Freshman Scholastic Honor Society

Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. Sept. 1955 to June, 1959. Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.

1956--Alpha Lambda Delta - Freshman Scholastic Honor Society

1956-57 -- Eliza McMillan Scholarship - Faculty Awarded

1957-58 -- Julia Mary and Charlotte Elizabeth Secor Scholarship- Faculty Awarded

1957-58 -- Washington University Merit Scholarship

All other years received First National Bank Scholarships based on need and merit.

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

April 1, 1987

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

FULLNAME: Ruth Bowles Bercaw

PRESENT POSITION (1) Artist

(2) Teach Design and Drawing,

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: Nov. 23, 1932 Cuyahoga Community College
Lake Spring, Missouri

CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA:

Painting / Joil

ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.): M.F.A. Kent State University, 1985

B.F.A. Washington University, 1959

University of Missouri, 1950-52

Julia Mary and Charlotte Elizabeth Secor Scholarship Award, Washington Univ.
Eliza McMillan Scholarship Award, Washington University
Washington University Scholarship Award, in Recognition of Outstanding
Merit

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):

1986 "Current Visions II," National juried competition, Germanow Art Gallery,
Rochester, N.Y., (Susan Crane, Juror)

1986 "SPACE: New Form, New Function," National juried competition, Arrowmont
Gallery, Gatlinburg, Tenn.

1986 "The May Show," Juried Competition, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland

1986 "Three Rivers Art," Regional Juried, Pittsburg, Pa. (Lynn Gumpert, Juror)

1986 Three person show--"Three Painters", SPACES, Cleveland, Ohio (see OVER)

COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

Washington University, St. Louis Missouri

Sohio, Cleveland, Ohio

The Huntington Bank Corporation, Columbus, Ohio

BankOne, Cleveland, Ohio

Audrey and Burton Shatz, St. Louis, Missouri

William Scheele, Cleveland, Ohio

Kay Tabor, Cleveland, Ohio

AWARDS:

First Place Award in Painting (1986), "32nd Annual Juried Show," JCC

First Place Award in Painting (1984), Fine Arts Association

Special Mention in Painting (1984), "30th Annual Juried Show," JCC

Purchase Award (1982), Sohio Exhibition

Juror's Award(s) (in 1978, 1976, 1975) in Painting, Emerald Necklace Shows

First Place Award in Painting (1962), "Annual Autumn Art Salon", Ft. Sill,

Oklahoma

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.

Internal spirit and content in works of art are pretty important to me just now, and in my own painting I have become fascinated with spatial qualities. In fact, I think ignoring space may be hopelessly old fashioned and a real anachronism in 1987.

For an artist to deal with space requires an awful challenge, as great or perhaps greater than that of the first physical rocket's lift off, for visually, psychologically and poetically new explorations and probes have to be made. For now, I am using the idea of space as an arena for (OVER)

1986 exhibitions (continued)

- Two person show, "Bercaw and Gamundi," ARTREACH Gallery, Columbus, Ohio
- Two person show, "Structural Energy; Bercaw and Fruce," Gallery West, Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, Ohio
- "Ohio Fine Arts Exposition," Statewide juried competition, Columbus, Ohio (Sam Gilliam, Juror)
- "32nd Annual Juried Show," Jewish Community Center, Cleveland, Ohio (I. Michael Danoff, Juror)
- "Six Painters," Invitational, Mayfield Library Gallery, Cleveland, Ohio
- "Cleveland Institute of Art Faculty Show," Cleveland, Ohio
- "Community College Faculty Show," Cleveland, Ohio

1985 Exhibitions:

- "The May Show," (Juried Competition), Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, O.
- "Other Dimensions: Works by Ruth Bercaw, Lawrence Krause and Michael Loderstedt," (Invitational) B. K. Smith Gallery, Lake Erie College, Ohio
- Solo show, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio
- "Ohio Fine Arts Exposition," Columbus, Ohio (Richard Estes, Juror)

etc. Other exhibitions and previous years' exhibitions available if you are interested.)

(PHILOSOPHY AND WORK, continued)

metaphorical play in which man's condition, his actions and values are considered. In this, space provides an ambient for both psychological distance and immediacy, present and future. It can serve as the unseen stage on which may be presented glimpses of a vast and unending drama in which man relates to our own (human) kind, to our earthly world, and to the universe.

In passing, one thing which may be of interest to you is that almost all of my compositional arrangements are initially conceived out of randomly selected fragments of musical patterns.

As to the piece which the May Show has selected to exhibit this year: it represents part of a series. All paintings in the series utilize original, environmentally based abstract images which serve as metaphors in statements about relationships. In the 1985 May Show, my "Spheres of Influence," a sizeable work, broke out of the usual rectangular format, injecting one panel into the ambient space; it employed large forms in relationships reflecting upon national and international concerns, and was fairly somber in mein. In the 1986 May Show, "Without Judgment" utilized a greater variety of forms and strong color in a boisterous composition in which no-harm, no malice-aforethought was the theme. "Allure of the Banana Replublics," which has been accepted into this 1987 show is a statement about our nation and its relationship to our neighbors. In this work there is an implied seduction into its space, with forms and colors referring both to the present and to the future.

(A further side note on "Allure": as can be seen from the above, I am quite interested in international affairs and events--as part of my M.F.A., for instance, I elected to take all the eight graduate credits required to be outside of art in political science. - I am additionally intrigued by Central America because my geologist father conducted exploration in British Honduras for the Palmer-Florida Corp. when I was a child. I recall his stories and photographs in picture albums about the area.)

RUTH B. BERCAW

2636 Lakeview Avenue
Rocky River, Ohio 44116
(216) 331-8743

EDUCATION

1985 Kent State University, M.F.A.
1959 Washington University, B.F.A.

GRANT

1990 Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Grant - \$5000

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

1990 New Paintings by Ruth Bercaw, C.A.G.E., Cincinnati, Ohio
"The May Show," Juried Competition, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland

1989 "The May Show," Special Mention for Painting, Juried Competition, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland
"Paintings by Ruth Bercaw," Mather Gallery, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland
"Women Artists: A Celebration," First Place in Painting, Regional Juried Competition, Youngstown
"United Nations World Environment Day Exhibition," Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland
"Governor's Residence Art Collection (1989/90)," Columbus, Ohio

1988 "Painted Wall Sculpture/Paintings," by Ruth B. Bercaw, Tenth Street Market, Cleveland
"Shape & Dimension, Works by Bercaw and Farinacci," National City Bank, Cleveland

1987 "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (Juried Competition)

1986 "32nd Annual Exhibition" JCC, Cleveland. First Place Award in Painting (Juror, I. Michael Danoff)
"Current Visions II," National Juried Competition, Germanow Art Gallery, Rochester, N.Y. (Susan Crane, Juror)
"Space: New Form New Function," National Juried Competition, Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg
"The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (Juried Competition)

(Abbreviated Bercaw Resumé, Selected Exhibitions, continued)

- "Three Painters, Bercaw, Brause, and Farinacci,"
SPACES, Cleveland, Ohio
- "Structural Energy: Bercaw and Fruce," Gallery West,
Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland
- "Bercaw and Gamundi," Contemporary Artists' Series,
ARTREACH Gallery, Columbus, Ohio
- "Three Rivers Art Festival," Regional Juried Competi-
tion, Pittsburgh (Lynn Gumpert, Juror)
- 1985 "Other Dimensions: Works by Ruth Bercaw, Lawrence
Krause and Michael Loderstedt," B. K. Smith
Gallery, Lake Erie College, Ohio
- "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland,
Ohio (Juried Competition)
- 1984 "Ten Paintings - Ten Painters," Kent State Univer-
sity, Kent, Ohio (Curator, Joan Gardner)
- "Ohio Art in the New Depression," Kent State Univer-
sity, Kent, Ohio (Regional Juried)
- 1983 "Portfolio '83" NOVA, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried)
- 1981 "Drawing," NOVA, Cleveland, Ohio (Juried)
- "Drawing Invitational," Seven Person Show, Baldwin
Wallace College, Berea, Ohio
- 1980 "Bonfoey on the Square Painters," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1979 "Whiskey Island Painters," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1977 "International Exhibition of Botanical Drawings,"
Clayton, N.J. (International Juried Competition)
- 1968 "The May Show," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland,
Ohio (Juried Competition)
- 1967 "Painters of the Circle Gallery," Cleveland, Ohio
- 1962 "Second Annual Autumn Salon Art Exhibit," First Place
Award in Painting, (Juried), Fort Sill, Oklahoma
- 1961 "The Missouri Show," St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis,
Missouri (Juried Competition)
- "Painting Exhibition," St. Louis Artists' Guild,
St. Louis, Missouri (Juried)

GALLERY AFFILIATIONS

Bonfoey's, Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, and
Scheele Galleries, of Cleveland, Ohio; and AES, Chicago

PERSONAL

Born Ruth Partin Bowles, Nov. 23, 1932, at Lake Spring,
Mo. Married Robert Woods Bercaw, Dec. 16, 1961. Two
children: Hyer, and Katherine.

2636 Lakeview Avenue
Rocky River, Ohio 44116
October 5, 1990

OCT 11 1990

Tom Hinson, Curator of Contemporary Art
The Cleveland Museum of Art
11150 East Boulevard at University Circle
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Mr. Hinson:

Thanks so much for your September 28 letter.

Enclosed are slides (five are details) of some paintings accomplished within the past two years. The slides are grouped according to some sort of hard-to-explain logic, and numbered in pencil.

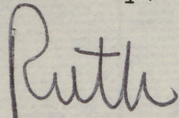
If I have sent more slides than you have time to view, then please eliminate those of the double-wedge pieces (slides numbered 13 through 17), along with the triple-wedge piece (slide number 18).

I have completed more paintings than this, of course; this represents a weaning down. It is hard to count numbers of works finished in two years, anyway, because I have become discouraged from time to time, and have painted over earlier pieces.

Also enclosed is a CV, along with a newspaper article on my just-completed solo show in Cincinnati. I was particularly happy to read the interviewer's personal response to my paintings.

I very much appreciate your interest in my work.

Sincerely,



Ruth B. Bercaw

Enclosures: 28 slides
Resumé
Article

2636 Lakeview Avenue
Rocky River, Ohio 44116
October 5, 1990

OCT 11 1990

Mary

post it note
attached

Tom Hinson, Curator of Contemporary
The Cleveland Museum of Art
11150 East Boulevard at University
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Mr. Hinson:

Thanks so much for your September 28 letter.

Enclosed are slides (five are details) of some paintings accomplished within the past two years. The slides are grouped according to some sort of hard-to-explain logic, and numbered in pencil.

If I have sent more slides than you have time to view, then please eliminate those of the double-wedge pieces (slides numbered 13 through 17), along with the triple-wedge piece (slide number 18).

I have completed more paintings than this, of course; this represents a weaning down. It is hard to count numbers of works finished in two years, anyway, because I have become discouraged from time to time, and have painted over earlier pieces.

Also enclosed is a CV, along with a newspaper article on my just-completed solo show in Cincinnati. I was particularly happy to read the interviewer's personal response to my paintings.

I very much appreciate your interest in my work.

Sincerely,

Ruth

Ruth B. Bercaw

Enclosures: 28 slides
Resumé
Article

Living

Art

Fourth Street shows spotlight 'shield' paintings

By Jerry Stein
Post staff reporter

Spotlighted amid a series of excellent shows opening the 1990-91 Fourth Street Gallery season tonight are the "shield" paintings of Ruth Bercaw.

The CAGE gallery is hung with energetically and colorfully painted geometric shapes — some are pointed pyramidal shapes turned upside-down; others are more elongated, with tapering slab sides Mrs. Bercaw calls "shields."

"I just decided I was bored with all the things I had been painting," said the Cleveland artist, who has been a realistic portrait painter and landscapist since the '50s. "I wanted to escape from realism."

One day in the early '80s, Mrs. Bercaw said, she recalled a memory from childhood: Her father, a geologist and engineer, would explain the rock strata Mrs. Bercaw saw in Colorado mining camps and the derivation of the various colors exposed in the strata.

But only now is this childhood memory "coming into my painting," Mrs. Bercaw said.

She began by doing two-dimensional paintings of roots of trees. But it was the spaces between the tree roots in the paintings — the soil — that became important. She arbitrarily painted them as triangles.

The next step, in 1986, was to create three-dimensional pyramids inspired from the triangles she first painted. She stretched canvas over supports and painted these surfaces.

The first pyramids were abstracts, but Mrs. Bercaw has moved on to incorporate figurative ideas onto these pyramidal planes. She added the presence of fossilized forms and built up the paint to create a textured surface — an impasto.



Ruth Bercaw

She made other painted wedges, now a bit larger and sometimes done in pairs. These show a concern for ecology. There is a whole series devoted to the endangered condor.

Finally, the wedges elongated into what is best described as a shield. With the shields, Mrs. Bercaw has moved dramatically into painting classical ennobled human figures. But these vulnerable, nude figures, which are quite painterly, are presented running straight on toward us from unseen dangers of the environment.

Beyond the ecological message about the human condition found in the shield paintings, Mrs. Bercaw's human figures achieve a kind of spirituality.

She uses rich colors, interjects the presence of black outlines reminiscent of Georges Rouault and achieves a certain translucent look of stained glass in the manipulation of the paint.

Perhaps Mrs. Bercaw has marched a bit too fast in this concept, from abstract representations of geology to endangered humankind. She perhaps misses subtle developments in her work by taking such giant steps. But her risk-taking is exciting and surely will mature.

Ruth Bercaw's structured paintings are at CAGE gallery, 344 W. Fourth St., through Sept. 28. Hours: noon Thursdays-Saturdays. Information: 381-2437.